



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

For Release: June 24, 1992

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WESTVACO CORPORATION AND GEORGE FRANKLIN, JR.
RECEIVE THE NATIONAL WETLANDS CONSERVATION AWARD

Westvaco Corporation of New York and George B. Franklin, Jr., of Louisiana are this year's recipients of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's corporate and individual National Wetlands Conservation Awards. Mike Hayden, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, will present the awards as part of the Federal Duck Stamp First Day Ceremony on June 30.

The award, a framed Federal Duck Stamp print and stamp accompanied by a plaque, is given annually to recognize private sector accomplishments in the field of wetlands conservation. Criteria include acreage of wetlands protected, benefits of wetland projects, and leadership and innovation in wetland conservation.

Westvaco Corporation of New York, New York, this year's winner of the top award to a private sector group, is a major manufacturer of paper, packaging, and chemical products. The firm's many achievements include establishment of a new wildlife management area in Kentucky and support through joint ventures for the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

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North American Waterfowl Management Plan joint ventures are international teams of federal, provincial, territorial, and state agencies; private conservation organizations; corporations; and individuals joining together to restore waterfowl and other migratory bird populations and to protect millions of acres of vital wetland habitats.

Franklin of Rayville, Louisiana, will receive the top award for a private sector individual. Franklin created, at his own expense, a refuge on his 820-acre farm that now hosts one of the largest concentrations of waterfowl in northeast Louisiana. He also improved wetlands for waterfowl on an additional 3,300 acres of his farm land by controlled flooding of agricultural fields and bottomland forest for waterfowl. Years ago, in cooperation with Louisiana wildlife biologists, Franklin released mottled ducks on his rice land in northeast Louisiana. As a result, mottled ducks are now found throughout much of that part of the state.

This year's judges for the 1992 National Wetlands Conservation Awards were Harvey K. Nelson, former Executive Director for the North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office; Rollin D. Sparrowe, President of the Wildlife Management Institute; and C. Phillip Agee, former wildlife biologist for the Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Federal Aid.